

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

FYI. [REDACTED] Caribbean Steering  
Group will include the attached on its agenda  
next week.

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Attachment:  
Trip Rpt, D/DIA  
(DCI/ICS 84-5350)

DIA review completed.

Date

6 APR 1984

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DIA review completed.

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DCI/ICS 84-5350

8 March 1984

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S/NF-51/DR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Trip Report (U)

1. (S/NF) My trip across South America from 15 February to 3 March 1984 produced no great surprises; however, it brought into better focus conditions in the countries I visited and enabled me to pinpoint concerns expressed by the military leadership. One of my main reasons for visiting South America was to discuss the situation in Bolivia which I covered in my message to you on 26 February.

2. (S/NF) I will attempt to highlight concerns expressed to me in some degree of priority. Almost without exception the various military establishments believe that the US may be focusing too much attention on current problems in Central America with little or no understanding that conditions further south could lead to serious disturbances over the next five-ten years. Economic and political conditions in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela border on a disaster and are in several instances compounded by internal corruption at many levels. On one hand the military is attempting to develop the mechanics for combating insurgency and on the other hand few positive steps have been taken to stop or curb the corruption. My meetings were basically with Colonels and Generals who were either trained in this country or have visited here. At the majority of the stops, it was obvious that our military training program is not reaching a sufficient number of middle grade (captain to lieutenant colonel) officers and that the majority of these officers have no understanding of our society or how we do our business. At the very least it leads to a better understanding of the European model and a lack of interest in this country. It certainly diminishes our contacts and influence.

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My contacts with the US military groups revealed that our training programs in Panama are effective for the mechanics only within the MOS specialty but not particularly helpful in the development of nation-to-nation relationships. We come off very poorly when compared with military schooling offered by the USSR, Cuba and other communist nations.

3. (S/NF) I was also struck by the effectiveness, especially in Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela, of Cuban disinformation concerning the destruction or deterioration of the armed forces in El Salvador. Much of this was tracked to General Noriega of Panama and I did my best to set the record straight.

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cohesive economic and political program and will not depend solely on the military. If we are not successful in Central America, there is the very strong likelihood of a chain reaction to the South. The Colombians, in

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particular, believe that Cuba could not afford to attack Costa Rica or Panama because of: (1) strong reaction from the Socialist International, and (2) US treaty commitment for defense of the Canal. If Central America falls they see Colombia as the next likely target. Ecuador believes it could go communist without a shot being fired if the left assumes power in Colombia and Peru.

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5. (S/NF) The alarming growth of narcotics involvement with the subversive movement was brought to my attention at every stop except Brazil. The depth of concern was in direct proportion to the involvement of the particular country with producers and processors. For example, in 1983 the largest guerrilla group in Colombia was estimated to have received 10 billion pesos (US \$10,000,000) which is available for purchase of arms, logistics support and payment of personnel. Such interaction is also evident to some extent in Peru and Bolivia where corruption of the armed forces, whose members are poorly paid, is a menacing turn of events. The war on drugs must be intensified if we are to stop this. I saw good cooperation at each stop between [redacted] however, present efforts will not suffice.

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6. (C) My visit to Peru confirmed that the country is not yet a Soviet satellite. However, the degree of dependence on the Soviet Union within the Army and Air Force is increasing, while our influence is waning, and the Soviets are sending increasing numbers of Peruvians to the USSR for training courses lasting up to seven years. While the senior military leadership remains strongly anticommunist, a growing number of mid-level personnel will have been exposed to heavy doses of Soviet influence and none of our own. The USSR is also beginning to apply heavy pressure on the Bolivians to buy Soviet equipment -- pressure Bolivia may be increasingly unable to resist.

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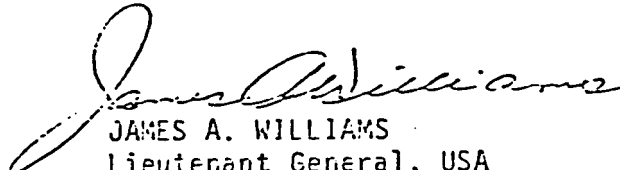
7. (S/NF) In Brazil, the armed forces are apprehensive over the issue of elections and what effect this would have upon transfer to civilian rule. The military leadership is uneasy over the proliferation of candidates, criticism of the administration and President, and of the ultimate stability of the government. Paraguay is understandably concerned by these developments in their larger neighbor especially considering the age of President Stroessner whose own rule could be coming to an end. The Paraguayans are also upset at the turn of events in Argentina where return to civilian rule has deprived them of sponsorship provided by the previous military government. Furthermore, Paraguay's lack of an effective intelligence network causes reaction to almost every event, however insignificant it may be. Other nations on my trip are also watching developments in Brazil and Argentina for evidence that democracy can truly take hold. Such near term events will unfold along their own course and can only be watched, not effected by the US military.

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JAMES A. WILLIAMS  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Director

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SecDef  
DepSecDef

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